

TIDAL FORECAST DEFINITIONS

There are three levels of tidal flooding. They are minor, moderate and major.

In the **MINOR** category, only the most vulnerable roadways flood. The majority of roads remain passable. There is no significant threat to life. Any impact on property is minimal. This type of event is covered by a Coastal Flood Advisory*.

* The National Weather Service in Mount Holly issues a Coastal Flood Advisory for minor flooding only when the water level is expected to exceed the minor threshold by 0.3 feet or more. Low-end events and the localized minor flooding that usually occurs around the full and new moon are often not covered by an advisory being that they are relatively common occurrences and their impact is limited.

In the **MODERATE** category there is widespread flooding of roadways, with many becoming impassable. Lives may be at risk when people put themselves in harm's way. Some damage to vulnerable structures may occur. This type of event is covered by a Coastal Flood Warning.

In the **MAJOR** category there is flooding that is severe enough to cause structural damage along with widespread flooding of roadways. Some evacuations become necessary. Vulnerable homes and businesses may be severely damaged or destroyed. Numerous roads become impassable and some neighborhoods may be isolated. The flood waters become a danger to anyone who attempts to cross on foot or in a vehicle. This type of event is covered by a Coastal Flood Warning which may contain enhanced wording to emphasize the significant threat to life and property.

The National Weather Service in Mount Holly provides a list of locations that begin to flood when the water reaches certain levels (Flood Impacts) at all 44 NOS and USGS tide gauges in its area of responsibility. There are also lists of historic high water levels. All the information is found under the Coastal Flooding tab on the website.

The water levels listed under the Flood Impacts refer to the water levels at the specific tide gauges. The heights are not to be interpreted as an indication of the water levels at the actual locations mentioned in the impact statements. Those locations are often a number of miles away from the reference tide gauges.

It is important to remember that the impact statements are based on estimates. A number of factors can cause the flooding associated with a particular water level to vary somewhat from event to event. Those factors include rainfall, wave action and the number of tide cycles during which there is an onshore flow.

Being that the impact statements are based on estimates, it is more useful to focus on the expected flood category rather than the specific water level forecasts. The categories (minor, moderate, major) provide a much better overall picture of what to expect.

Total Water Level forecasts are available for the following tide gauge locations.

Perth Amboy, New Jersey (Arthur Kill)

Sandy Hook, New Jersey (Sandy Hook Bay)

Manasquan, New Jersey (Watson Creek)

Barnegat Light, New Jersey (Barnegat Bay)

Atlantic City, New Jersey (Oceanfront)

Ocean City, New Jersey (Great Egg Harbor)

Cape May, New Jersey (Cape May Harbor)

Bivalve, New Jersey (Maurice River)

Burlington, New Jersey (Delaware River)

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (Delaware River)

Reedy Point, Delaware (Delaware River)

Bowers Beach, Delaware (Murderkill River)

Lewes, Delaware (Delaware Bay)

Tolchester Beach, Maryland (Chesapeake Bay)

Claiborne, Maryland (Eastern Bay)